

Should I Stay or Should I Go? by Junigatsu84

Series: [Stranger Things: Normal High School Life, Right? \[3\]](#)

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: After Eleven (Stranger Things) Closes the Gate, Awkwardness, Bromance, Brotherly Love, Coming Out, Friendship, LGBTQ Themes, M/M, Male Friendship, Season 3, Sleepovers, figuring it out, friendship fic, gay will, platonic, straight mike

Language: English

Characters: Joyce Byers, Mike Wheeler, Will Byers

Relationships: Will Byers & Mike Wheeler

Status: Completed

Published: 2017-12-16

Updated: 2017-12-16

Packaged: 2022-04-03 14:49:02

Rating: Teen And Up Audiences

Warnings: No Archive Warnings Apply

Chapters: 1

Words: 2,931

Publisher: [archiveofourown.org](#)

Summary:

Will has come out to his friends Will, Eleven, and his brother, Jonathan, but for the most part he is still firmly in the closet. He can barely cope with the changes in his friendship with Mike. As it turns out there's still a lot to figure out. With sleepovers in particular.

This work is a one-shot. Although it stands alone, it's a follow up to Will coming out. Mike and Will's relationship in this fic is platonic and focuses on their friendship.

Should I Stay or Should I Go?

Friday Night- 5:11pm

Mike sat at the desk in Will's room tapping his pencil as he read. Will was drawing in his sketchbook, teetering between moments of inspiration and contemplation. The piles of paper spread across the floor made sense to Will but would seem very haphazardly arranged to the unknowing eye. There were scraps of notebook paper but mostly drawings laid out to assemble some sort of plot.

Will had gotten a new role playing book, Heroes Unlimited. He had been trying to write a campaign for the group but was hitting a wall. So Mike had come over to help. They had spent the first hour pouring over the book, but into the second hour, Will had resorted to drawing out his ideas and Mike was left to writing them down.

Mike looked up at Will, "Why did you buy this book, if you're not actually going to write? There's a lot of good stuff in here."

Will looked a little guilty. "Sorry..."

Mike replied, "There's nothing to apologize for. It's your money, Will. I'm just wondering why you bought it."

Will was quiet for a moment, "I- Well..." He sighed, "We keep calling everything we've seen Demogorgons and Mind Flayers. I keep looking at the stuff in D&D and wondering if these things actually exist. And, if they do, can they get here? It's... not what it was. The game used to be an escape but now... I'd just rather use a new system."

Mike looked stunned, "Why didn't you say anything? I would've gotten something new. We could've played something else." Now it was his turn to feel guilty. He hated that Will kept stuff like this to himself.

He shrugged. "It's not a big deal. I had been browsing stuff for a while but I didn't like a lot of the other tabletop games, 'til I saw this one."

Mike looked at the page he had been reading over. It was a

completely different backdrop for them. Instead of the high fantasy setting that Dungeons and Dragons was steeped in, this one played off of the real world but with heroes and supervillains. It was entirely character driven, though the character creation was pretty complex. But it had a lot of creative potential.

"Besides," Will continued, "If we start with a new system, everybody will be on the same page and Eleven and Max can join without feeling like they're missing stuff. Everybody will be on the same learning curve."

He had a point. They had tried playing with Max and El before but they spent more time explaining than getting actual plot done.

"So..." Mike raised his eyebrows, "do you want me to write it then?"

"I can draw the settings. And the villains. Help out with the ideas and story."

"But you want me to write it."

Will put his hands together and gave a pleading smile. "Please."

Mike rolled his eyes, a smile tugging at the corners of his mouth, though. He turned back to his notebook and started scratching stuff down. He was already beginning to develop the groundwork for a plot with the ideas scattered on the floor.

They worked together on Heroes for another hour. After which, they threw some fish sticks in the oven, nearly burnt them, and played video games. As the night wore on, Mike kept glancing up at the time. It was getting late. Normally, he would've just slept over. He had convinced himself that he would this time, too. But a sinking feeling had formed in the pit of his stomach. Should he sleep over? Will was gay. Wouldn't Mike sleeping over Will's be akin to Mike sleeping over El's? It didn't matter than Mrs. Byers still didn't know about Will. In fact, that made it worse. When was she supposed to be home anyway? Didn't the store close up by 9?

Mike did his best to shove the thoughts out of his head. He could pretend everything was normal. He would worry about it when Mrs.

Byers got back. Until then, there was no point in stressing over it. He had to keep repeating this to himself as the hours wore on.

10:37pm

Mike and Will were playing Gauntlet, eating through their second bowl of popcorn, when the door opened. Mike perked up. "Hi, Mrs. Byers." She looked exhausted, more so than usual anyway.

"Mike! Mike!" Will cautioned, "You're dying, dude!"

Mike turned around and half heartedly fought the boss back, but he wasn't that upset his character had died. Will moved frantically in the game to try and avoid attack but alas, this level was impossible with one person and he died shortly after. Will sighed and put the controller down. He turned off the game and stood up.

"Hey, Mom." He walked over to the kitchen, where they'd left dishes. He grabbed a dish rag and started cleaning up. "Sorry about the mess."

"That's okay, honey." She sank into the chair in the kitchen and lit up a cigarette.

Mike came in and grabbed a towel to dry.

Will turned to Mike, "You don't have to. I got this."

"I don't mind helping." The sooner the mess was clean, the sooner he could ask Mrs. Byers to take him home.

Joyce smiled, "Thank you, boys."

Will talked over his shoulder, "No problem, mom. What kept you so late?"

Joyce took a long drag before sighing, "The new shipment of stuff didn't come until 15 minutes before quitting time. I had to stay while he unloaded everything out of the truck. I'm just glad this day is over."

Mike opened his mouth but stopped himself. He realized now that waiting for Mrs. Byers might not have been the best plan. He should have called his mom to pick him up. But then Will would have been in the house alone and that would have broken the unspoken rule at the Byer residence: Will was never allowed to be home alone.

So what was he supposed to do? If he waited any longer, she would probably start getting ready for bed? This was bad. No, it had to be now.

“Hey... Mrs. Byers? Do you think you could drive me home?”

Will stopped washing the plate in his hand and looked at Mike. Mike did not return the gaze. He didn't know where to look but Will was definitely not it. He could feel Will's bewilderment or even hurt. For someone so quiet, he could give a speech with those eyes.

“Why? What's wrong?”

“I forgot that I have an early day tomorrow.”

She shook her head in surprise. This was very unlike him. “It's very late, Mike. I can drive you first thing in the morning. What time do you need to be there?”

“I... Is Jonathan coming home soon? Maybe he could?”

“Mike. He's in Chicago. He went to tour colleges there with Nancy. You knew that, didn't you?”

Mike made a face. Nancy had told their parents that she was going to go with Stacy and her mom to tour colleges. She never mentioned Jonathan. He should have known to suspect it, but he hadn't really been paying attention. “She never mentioned it.”

Joyce put her head in her hand. She liked Nancy well enough, but she thanked her stars that she had boys. The amount of tales that girl told to her parents could fill up a novel.

“I'll drive you back first thing tomorrow morning. Is 8 okay?”

Mike nodded. Calling his mom at this point was out of the question.

She would be in bed asleep and calling her to pick him up would be an “emergency only” situation. He resigned himself to the fact that he’d have to stay the night. The knot in his stomach tightened, and now it would be super awkward between him and Will.

Mike risked a glance at his friend. Will was washing dishes again, angrily but trying to hide it.

They finished cleaning up and Will got the sleeping bag from out of the closet, along with the extra pillow and comforter. He tossed them on the bed and began picking up the papers. All in silence. And not his normal Will silence. But a frustrated one.

Mike had no idea how to broach the subject or what to say. He could only feel himself getting more awkward just standing there. He started to help clean up the papers off the floor.

He mumbled, “I’m sorry, Will.”

Will opened his mouth and it looked like he was going to let Mike have it but he stopped himself. He walked over to the door and checked to see if his mom was still there. She was turning the lights off.

“Good night, Will.” He was almost as tall as her now, but she still had enough height to kiss his head.

Will hugged her, “Night, mom.”

Being fourteen and still kissing your mom goodnight would, in most friend groups, be grounds for relentless teasing. But thankfully Will’s friends were never like that. And even if they were to ever bust his chops about it, that wouldn’t stop him. His mother was always in his corner, whether fighting off monsters or assholes, and he loved her for it. He knew there was no reason to be in the closet with her, but... a small part of him was still scared. He desperately wanted to cling to what little normalcy he had left. Things couldn’t be normal again between him and Mike. Tonight was proof of that.

He watched his mother close her bedroom door before he did the same. Will turned to Mike and spoke in a hushed, but stern tone, “If

you didn't want to sleepover all you had to do was say so."

"I know, Will. I'm sorry."

"Listen, Mike. Stuff's gonna change. I know that. But you need to be upfront with me about when stuff bothers you."

"I didn't know, Will."

"So it dawned on you while you were washing dishes?" He said sarcastically.

Mike couldn't look at Will. He knew that he'd really hurt him.

Will continued, "Tonight was so much fun. It was like nothing had changed."

Will closed his eyes and breathed to calm himself. He was getting emotional and he didn't want to add tears to the mix. "Why didn't you say anything?"

Mike replied, "Because everything felt so normal. I didn't want to ruin it."

"But it sucks because then it hits me like a truck. I expect things to change," Will said, "I know they are going to. I just don't know what things. That's where you're supposed to help me out. I don't know what's OK and what's not anymore. If you don't tell me, then I go on thinking everything is normal, when it isn't."

"I didn't know!" Mike replies in a whisper. "I thought it would be okay, Will. But the later it got... I just..." Mike sighed and touched the bridge of his nose.

Will encouraged him, "Please, just tell me."

Mike was nervous. Could Will really handle this? But he dismissed the thought. Yes. Will could handle this. He could handle so much more than people gave him credit for. "I started thinking, since you like guys, wouldn't a guy sleeping over be the equivalent of a girl sleeping over a guy's house? Is that awful to say?"

Will was quiet.

Mike continued, "I mean I've slept over hundreds of times. It's not a thing where I think you'd... or... I just... I'd feel a hell of a lot better if your mom knew. Then, she could make the judgement call. If she was okay with it, I think I would be too. But the fact that she doesn't know... makes it weird." Will was quiet and looking down at the floor, thinking but still obviously upset. "Why haven't you told her yet?" Mike immediately realized that he'd filled the air with the wrong question.

Will sat up defiantly. "Maybe because it's weird enough as it is."

Mike interrupted. "I didn't mean it like that."

"Yes, you did. Because it is. I kissed you," he whispered even quieter. He looked away. "I don't know what made us think that sleepovers could be normal. I'm sorry, Mike."

"I'm the one that's sorry."

They stood in the awkward silence. After a moment, Will offered, "I can set up a bed for you on the couch, unless you want the bed. I can take the couch, whatever's more comfortable."

"The couch is fine." Will grabbed the comforter while Mike grabbed the pillow and sleeping bag.

12:24 am

Mike laid on the couch, trying not to breathe through his nose. The couch reeked of cigarettes. He couldn't sleep. This whole situation bothered him, for multiple reasons. First, he wasn't comfortable with the fact that Mrs. Byers still didn't know. "But," Mike thought, "Why does that even matter?"

Well, for one, Will was inviting a guy to sleep over when he probably shouldn't.

He questioned his self conscious, "But why does that matter? It wouldn't be okay for me to sleep over El's because we're in love."

Sleeping over would have all the romantic implications of a couple. But things weren't like that between Mike and Will. "Well... at least not for me." Maybe that was the part that bothered him.

Mike knew that Will would never overstep bounds but the fact that his friend had feelings for him changed everything. There would be an invisible tension hanging in the air. Would Will be wishing for romance? But then again, how many sleepovers had they had? How long had that feeling been there and Mike simply been oblivious? Was it really just this year or had it been for longer? And if it had, if that tension had been there for years, why did it matter now?

"Because now I know it's there."

"SO WHAT?" His mind asked, "Why does it matter?"

Mike covered his face. This cross examination was driving him crazy. He needed to sleep. He turned onto his stomach and got a full lungful of that stale cigarette smell. That did it.

Mike sat up. He grabbed the blankets and pillows and walked over to Will's room. He quietly opened the door and watched as Will slept.

He thought, "Now you're the weird one." But he couldn't help it. Maybe he was being overly sentimental. Maybe he was overtired. But the way Will was sleeping... it reminded him of the hospital. The first time Will had been in the hospital, Mike had visited him nearly everyday, sometimes he'd catch him awake.

But often, Will would be sleeping. He would stay for a while, read the newest X-Men next to him, hoping he'd wake up. If he did, they'd play games or plan a new campaign. If not, Mike would leave the comic so that Will would have something to do.

Mike didn't want things to change. Will was his brother. He'd nearly lost him twice. They were growing up. How much longer would they even have? What if they went to different colleges? Or if Mrs. Byers ever decided to move away from Hawkins? What if the Mind Flayer came back? What if this time, it got Will?

He shook himself to stop the thought. The sound startled Will awake,

he gasped.

Will had night terrors since coming back. Mike was used to being careful when getting up in the middle of the night. He would try to adopt harmless positions so Will wouldn't wake thinking there was something, instead of someone, standing in the door. Mike had been lost in thought though, and forgotten.

Will was visibly annoyed, "Mike? What the hell?"

"Sorry."

Will rubbed the sleep out of his eyes, "What's wrong?"

Mike was quiet, "The couch smells like cigarettes."

Will sighed and threw off the covers, grabbing his pillow. "I'll take the couch. You can take the bed."

"No... that's... No. It's not what I meant."

Will looked up, confused and tired.

Mike confessed, "I don't want everything to change. I think what bothers me the most is that... is the idea that you'll want more. And that it's selfish of me to want things to stay the way that they are while you're wishing that they were more."

Will looked somewhat more awake now.

"I'm not making sense, am I? I don't know what I'm saying but... is it going to bother you? Me staying? Sleeping in here? To pretend that it's still like always?"

Mike was blinking away tears, it was dark enough that he hoped Will wouldn't notice. It was difficult enough without getting emotional.

"It won't bother me."

"But am I being selfish?"

"No, Mike. You're being what you've always been, my best friend." He smiled.

Mike smiled too, relieved.

Will said, "I still feel it, a little." A lot. "But I'm moving past it. I want to move past it. If you know that and you're still okay staying, you're welcome to sleep here."

Mike nodded. "I can live with that." He laid out his sleeping bag and pillow on the floor and settled in. Will laid back down.

Mike nestled into the pillow. The room smelled like crayons, junk food, and years of memories. The smell harkened to late nights filled with hushed whispers hours after bedtime, pillow fights, and laughter. Years of friendship. Mike understood that some things would change. But not everything. They'd keep the important stuff and figure the rest out together.

Author's Note:

Edit: I would like to apologize, I initially categorized this as Will/ Mike instead of Will & Mike, implying that there was more than a platonic relationship. I'm sorry if that was deceiving. I fixed the tags. Thank you to those of you who reached out and let me know. <3